

Reading Municipal Light Department (RMLD) Board of Commissioners
Policy Committee Minutes
March 20, 2009

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
READING, MASS.

2009 JUL 17 P 12:46

Start Time: 8:30 a.m.

End Time: 9:15 a.m.

Attendees:

Committee Members: Mr. Soli and Ms. O'Neill

Board Members: Mr. Pacino

RMLD Staff: Messrs. Cameron and Donahoe

Oriental Car Club

Dick Nichols

Nimble Thimblers

Rita Robertson

Beth Licari

Barbara Malek

Eileen Graham

Pearl Ferris

Theresa Jamieson

Nedra Weaver

Pam Manahan

Ginny Godina

Judith Dougherty

Andrea Willey

June Sheridan

Mary Wignall

North Parish Quilters

Dawn DeCosta

Mayflower Rug Hookers

Happy DiFranza

Heidi Lee

Ms. O'Neill called the meeting to order and asked Mr. Cameron to state the reasons for his decision to stop the use of the RMLD cafeteria for use by outside groups.

Mr. Cameron said that security was a major issue in his decision because groups are using the RMLD cafeteria with no supervision. This was a concern mentioned in the 2007 Security report performed for the RMLD. On several occasions, the groups either did not pick up the fob for entry into the cafeteria or lost the fob, requiring the Station Operator to let the group attendees in through the side entrance. The Station Operators have the responsibility of monitoring the electrical operations of the system and not to be answering the door for outside groups. The Station Operators have reported on numerous occasions that the outside groups were parked in the right of way in back of the building. The RMLD plainly states in the rules that parking in the right of way is strictly prohibited but it is ignored. Other entities having properties adjacent to the RMLD have complained to the RMLD that people have parked in the right of way and obstructed their trucks at certain times.

Mr. Cameron went on to say that there is also a level of insurance risk the RMLD is assuming if someone is injured during the use of the cafeteria. Mr. Cameron also mentioned that at times children under eighteen who have accompanied parents or guardians to the RMLD cafeteria during meetings considered to be attended by adults. The RMLD has no idea the level of supervision for the children during the meetings.

Happy DeFranza, also from the Mayflower Rug Hookers added that her group has been meeting here since 1994 and six to eight Saturdays a year from September through May. Ms. DeFranza went on to say that the RMLD received variances related to this building in return for outside groups using this building. Both Messrs. Pacino and Cameron pointed out that the RMLD received no such variances and that this was an incorrect statement. Ms. DeFranza did say that when the fob was picked up for entry to the cafeteria there was a note attached reminding the group that parking was restricted to the RMLD parking area and she felt that these letters were hostile. Mr. Cameron said that these notes were given to other groups as a reminder and were not hostile or meant to be hostile.

Mr. Soli said that he is here for a quorum but he has a conflict because he is part of a group called VITA that does income tax assistance for certain group and they use the RMLD facilities from time to time. He said that he, as a member of the Policy Committee, would recuse himself from voting on this issue. He also said that policies for conference room are important because he has heard of two instances, one in Wakefield and one in Lewiston, Maine, where the groups using the facilities damaged the rooms.

Theresa Jamieson of the Nimble Thimblers said that she always thought that her group and the RMLD had a warm relationship and it would be a shame if they have to move. The economic times are bad if they have to pay for a room and that they comply with all the rules.

Ms. O'Neill told the attendees that she did not want to make a decision in haste but she is committed to look into this issue.

Mr. Cameron asked the groups what they felt if they had to pay for the use of room. Several members of the group answered that it would depend on the cost. Mr. Cameron replied that the Town of Reading charges the cost of a custodian when rooms are used during hours when the Town of Reading facilities are not manned. If the RMLD did this it would cost about \$150 for three hours, which is the approximate overtime rate for Facilities personnel. The sense of the groups in attendance was that they were not receptive to the recommended cost proposed for use of RMLD's facilities.

Mr. Nichols asked if each group be assessed differently?

Ms. Robertson added that she didn't think it was worth the hassle of coming up with another arrangement and was uncomfortable on how the entire issue has been handled. Her group has to plan for their programs and she would continue to look into alternatives.

Ms. O'Neill thanked the attendees for their input and that the committee and the General Manager would be addressing the issue.

Motion to Adjourn

At 9:15 a.m. Ms. O'Neill made a motion seconded by Mr. Soli to adjourn the Committee Meeting.

Motion carried 2:0:0.